

ABSTRACT OF THE DISCLOSURE

A communication system, such as an H.323 system, in which a gatekeeper (108) may support a plurality of virtual private networks or virtual domains. Endpoints (102a, 102b, 106) are provided with communication domain identifiers (CDI) which identify the endpoints' domain. The CDI is provided during call setup and used during address resolution. In particular, H.323 endpoints according to the present invention are provided with a control layer which provides a communication domain identification (CDI) assigned to a user during call setup or other situations in which it is desirable to have domain-restricted functionality. In the call setup embodiment, the CDI may be used, during the address resolution phase of the H.323 direct signaling mode, to determine whether the call is to a user at another extension of the same company. In the direct signaling mode, the communication domain identification control layer accesses a local database to make this determination. Similarly, the CDI may be provided during call setup in gatekeeper routed signaling. In this case, a communication domain identification control layer provides the CDI to the gatekeeper. The gatekeeper then performs the address resolution using the CDI to determine whether the call is to a user of another extension of the same company. The CDI may be used to provide multiple virtual domains associated with a single gatekeeper, and also provide a virtual domain associated with multiple gatekeepers.